



Cooperative Development of Planning and Evaluation Skills

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Described here is one approach to the writing of a school's plan for developing and improving instruction and evaluation.

To qualify for approval to implement Early Childhood Education (serving grades K-3) and Title I Programs (serving grades K-6), California schools must submit a detailed "plan" to the State Department of Education. Such a "plan" includes explicit goals and objectives that are to be attained as well as structure, content, and processes of instruction. Although all schools must follow the same basic format, each school's plan is unique in that it

must reflect and represent the population for which it is designed and should be based on a comprehensive needs assessment.

Serving as an Instructional Adviser for 25 Los Angeles schools and having been faced with writing plans for specially funded programs the two previous years, I was fully cognizant of the total frustration project writers and teaching staff experience in developing and writing such detailed plans for the instructional program. In most situations, they have neither the time nor the skills necessary to accomplish the task. Therefore, I felt it was my obligation to *teach* the skills and to begin that

preparation *early* in the school year. How could a school write a plan with specific goals and objectives to be attained the following year if it had not critically evaluated the present instructional program? Had a comprehensive needs assessment been conducted? What kind of information was gathered? How had it been analyzed? Who were the decision makers, and how were they going to utilize the information? Effective

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evaluation of either process or outcome (formative or summative) is highly dependent on program planning that is realistic, comprehensive, and understood by the teaching staff that will be implementing the program. Therefore, *evaluation* seemed to be the key.

Working with the Staff

The Evaluation Improvement Program (EIP) materials developed under the direction of the California State Department of Education were, to me, the most effective means of assisting school administrators, program coordinators, and instructional staffs in developing plans for program implementation and evaluation. The EIP materials were comprehensive and “workable.”

Early in the fall, I scheduled a series of meetings for school principals, program coordinators, and selected teaching staff members. Participants were given a set of the EIP materials. The overhead projector was used extensively as a visual aid. Because it was imperative to

begin at the “grass-roots” level, three series of meetings were scheduled. The first phase involved several meetings devoted to the “Evaluation Process” and the types of evaluation data that may be collected (formative and summative) in relation to learner achievement, supportive activities, and physical and nonphysical environmental factors.

Working in small groups, coordinators, administrators, and teachers had the opportunity to use the EIP materials by participating in simulation exercises and by identifying basic types of evaluation data using hypothetical situations and later their own school’s statistics. Standardized and criterion-referenced test scores as well as other predetermined contributing factors in relation to learner achievement in both the cognitive and affective domains were studied and analyzed in detail with the assistance of district personnel from the Division of Research and Evaluation. It was important for the participants to realize that different kinds of testing instruments provide a variety of information that is critical to the program evaluation process.

The second series of meetings was directed to the “Needs Assessment Process.” Schools shared the instruments they had developed and explained how the data were gathered, analyzed, and utilized in developing and evaluating their plans. Participants found, reflecting particularly from our first series of meetings on the “Evaluation Process,” that much time was spent in surveying teachers and parents, and that, too often, the information gathered was irrelevant or not properly used. The participants proceeded to rewrite and/or revise the items within their needs assessment instruments that tended to be ambiguous or inappropriate for the purpose the instrument was

intended to serve—keeping in mind that each school's plan must be unique to its population.

The last series of meetings was one of the most critical: "Goals and Objectives." Working in small groups once again, program coordinators, school administrators, and teachers had extended experiences in writing goals and objectives based first on hypothetical data. Since performance objectives are the key to the evaluation to be performed, the kind of design to be developed, the instruments to be used, and the resources required to perform the evaluation, much time was devoted to them. It was stressed to the program participants that performance objectives must relate directly to program goals and needs statements and that they should include all six parts to be a "complete" objective: who learns or does what, when, under what conditions, at what minimum level, and how will it be measured? Participants later carefully examined the existing objectives of their school's program and noted where rewrites must occur. Percentage and level gains written into performance objectives were analyzed in conjunction with the program solutions that were directly related to reaching those objectives.

Following each series of meetings, the administrators and program

coordinators were requested to conduct similar meetings with their instructional staffs to more fully develop the concepts presented. As an adviser, I assisted in staff development meetings and found the "Goals and Objectives" phase to be the area most requested for assistance. As a result of the staff development meetings using the EIP materials, I found the local staffs to be much more



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knowledgeable and skilled in the total evaluation process.

Although we were able to cover only a relatively small portion of the available EIP materials in the three series of meetings with principals, coordinators, and teachers, the participants concluded that the California Evaluation Improvement Program materials proved to be invaluable in developing the skills necessary to improve their expertise as project writers and program evaluators. \square

More materials in the **evaluation improvement program**

Since it was announced last summer, the EIP has expanded its list of materials for use in program evaluation.

- From the California State Department of Education—*Program Evaluator's Guide*, August 1977, \$12
Evaluation Trainer's Guide, June 1977, \$9.50
Workbook on Program Evaluation, March 1977, \$8

- From the New Jersey State Department of Education—*Information for Assessment and Evaluation*, December 1977, \$5.50
- From the National Institute of Education—*Consumer's Guide to Evaluation Training Materials* (spring 1978)
- From ETS Media Productions—*Five audiocassettes on purposes, planning, design, instruments, and relating evaluation to accountability*, November 1977. Set of five \$20

For supervisors, managers, principals, and teachers. Helpful in planning, inservice training, and evaluation.

For further information, write to:



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